

Western & Southern Open

Thursday, August 17, 2017

John Isner

Press Conference

J. ISNER/F. Tiafoe

7-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Prior to the rain delay at 4-All in the second, you weren't having a lot of looks on his serve. You came out of that rain delay, again, Love-30 right away. You break two games later. What changed after that break?

JOHN ISNER: I think I was just able to regroup mentally. Also physically. I mean, it was really humid out there, sweating a lot.

I actually didn't mind that rain delay at all. Went in the locker room, showered, changed, stretched, ate a little. Was very refreshed coming back out there to finish the match.

You know, yeah, you're right. I mean, I was kind of on him definitely a little bit more after the rain delay than I was during the course of the whole match.

Very happy to be off the court. I mean, we could have easily -- you know, if I didn't break at 5-All, we could be 2-All in a tiebreaker right now, not finishing. That would suck (smiling). Right now I'm happy that I'm sitting here.

Q. You mentioned a couple of times Frances just being 19 years old. What was your game like when you were 19? And what advice would you give a 19-year-old John Isner?

JOHN ISNER: My game, I mean, I was in college, my game really wasn't that good. I was hurt a lot, too. I hurt my back in college. Right now the advice I'd give myself back then is just to be a little bit more professional about my tennis. I think that's actually what really turned me on to becoming more committed to tennis was when I got hurt, because I knew that couldn't be the case going forward. Being such a big guy, I needed to work harder with flexibility and strength and all that stuff that goes into, you know, being a good tennis player.

I did not have that at 19. I think that injury my freshman year at college helped a lot.

Q. You won one of your first challenger



tournaments in Lexington. Do you remember anything about that experience?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I do. I remember a lot about that. I remember, if I could tell you, I beat this guy, Bruno Echagaray, in the finals indoors. No, I didn't, actually. No, that's wrong. Maybe I beat Brian Wilson in the finals.

But anyway, I remember that tournament, and I remember after winning that tournament I was awarded a wildcard into the Legg Mason in D.C., like couple days later, and I made the final. That tournament was huge for me, because I went into the tournament in D.C., ATP tournament there, you know, with some confidence. Also with absolutely nothing to lose. So I was able to put together a few good weeks.

Q. Take us through some of your successes, your wins. Do you feel that excessive match play helped you with where you are now, or were you finding out some other things in your game that are working for you now?

JOHN ISNER: I think the match play, of course, helps tremendously. I said this earlier, I have had a better mental outlook when I take the court, but for sure, ever since Wimbledon I have been playing some very good tennis. Probably some of the best tennis I have played in quite some time.

I have been finishing matches in actually pretty quick fashion. I haven't played a three-set match since Wimbledon, either. I think I have played 12 matches and they have all been straight sets. The one I lost was in straight sets, but still, it's nice and it's saving my body quite a bit. Physically I feel great.

Q. Can you attribute the better mental outlook on anything?

JOHN ISNER: Well, just, you know, just being disappointed at Wimbledon this year, leaving that tournament, very disappointed. I knew I had to get back to work. That's what I did. I continued to work on my game.

But I just, you know, had some sit-downs with my team and some other people and kind of hashed some things out that were bothering me between the ears, and we were able to fix a few things, for sure.

Q. Obviously you have a lot of firepower in your game. I'm wondering, when you formulate game plans, is it just your default to go with a lot of firepower, or how often are you thinking about the other side of the court and maybe what they don't do so well?

JOHN ISNER: I would say mostly I focus on what's going on on my side of the court. I don't really change my game plan too much with the opponent I play.

What I do is pretty straightforward. Of course, try to serve well and, you know, mixing in some more serve-and-volley now, as well. Just trying to play on my front foot as much as possible.

But of course there are a few things, matchup-wise, that I do focus on. I focus on a little bit -- actually, after that rain delay, I was going -- I think I was going to Frances' backhand too much. That's more comfortable for me, hitting backhands crosscourt and forehands inside out. I needed to go to his forehand, which, in my opinion, is his weaker side, because his backhand is world class, and was able to extract a few errors there. For the most part, just focus on what's going on on my side of the net.

Q. Jared next. All-American quarter.

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I played Jared once. It was on grass a couple years ago, so it's been a while since we played. Can't really take much stock into that match, seeing as it was on grass in a warmup event before Wimbledon. He was two years younger than he is now.

He's playing some very good tennis. It's very impressive to see. He works really hard. Maybe, I don't know if you guys agree, maybe he doesn't quite get the credit that, you know, some of the other young guys that he's with, and he's the highest-ranked one right now.

He's certainly doing all the right things. I see him on the practice court. I see him working on his game, doing stuff in the gym. He has a good team around him. I think Jan-Michael Gambill is obviously doing a very good job for him.

Tomorrow's match will be tough, but I'm playing well, and I expect it to be a very tough match for him, as well. Just look forward to it. It's going to be a good match.

Q. Can you talk more about serve-and-volley. Do you foresee a trend where more people will be doing that? Why do you feel you want to do that more often?

JOHN ISNER: I don't think -- no, I don't see that as a trend going forward. For me, it's a way to shorten the

points. A lot of times, you know, when I don't serve and volley, I hit a serve and a floating ball will come back, and I'm like, Crap, I wish I would have serve-and-volleyed on that. That would have been a volley on top of the net. Sometimes it works out the other way, and they put the return at my feet when I do serve-and-volley.

It's just something that I think I should always mix in quite a lot, because it can get my opponents out of rhythm so they're not seeing the same thing over and over again. It's something I have been working on and I'm very comfortable doing, as well. I don't want to shy away from it.